Beyond Pan Africanism: Which way forward?

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This paper examines the dilemma posed towards Pan-Africanism and its conceptualization and actualizing capacity-building in the leadership and good governance in Africa. The failure of the leadership and good governance in Africa has its roots in the colonization and neo-colonization of African societies without regard to pre-existing ethno-political structures and ethno-religious beliefs and values, languages, and even historical and cultural linkages of the peoples of Africa. The displacement of these cultural variables have created methodological and conceptual crisis in leadership, governance and capacity building in Africa. This hindsight dilemma calls for a paradigm shift among practitioners and researchers in nation-building with reference to Pan-Africanism, drawing data from the emerging crises of the severity of ethnic militancy, and ethno-tribal actualization movements for self-governance in the Sub-Saharan nations in Africa. Thus the questions are will Pan-Africanism survive the threat and challenges in the 21st century? If yes, what are the solutions? The paper contends that the logic of neo-colonialism and globalization as contemporary social movements in Africa pose threats to leadership and good governance, specifically, with serious constraint on the unification and transformation agenda of Pan-Africanism and future Africa. Thus, search for solutions is being increasingly urgent and requires multidimensional approaches to deal with the dilemma pose to the principles of Pan-Africanism.

Keywords: Pan-Africanism, Unification, Leadership, Governance, Capacity building, Development, Dilemma.

INTRODUCTION

The severity of the dilemma towards capacity-building, good governance, leadership and development in African nation-states calls for Pan-Africanism project that is African oriented solutions, possibly including redrafting or renegotiating cultural relationships with her former colonial masters becomes imperative according to the universal principles of self-determination. This is because the consequences of colonial and neo-colonial experiences of African peoples are the threats and challenges facing African unification and development today. As Madubuike, (2015) aptly puts it, “the Eurocentric foundations of African Epistemologies how far and for how long?” In Africa, as elsewhere in history, colonial experience or mentality has a strange way of repeating itself in terms of political and economic structures and functions, and even the belief system, social values are altered and manipulated by the colonizers. The question is which way forward? This is very much at the centre of the political debate among the African political and intellectual elite. Kwarne Nkrumah's much maligned Pan-African 35-year blueprint — a political and economic union in the form of Union Government of African States — is resurfacing in various forms, and in a variety of forums. Such a union would have been based on such mechanisms and institutions as an African Common Market (ACM) and integrated monetary zone, with a common currency and central bank on the economic and financial front. On the military side, the union would have had a unified defense strategy with an African Military High Command arid a unified foreign policy and diplomacy on the international diplomatic front (Nkrumah 1963: Martin, 1992).

It is on this background that certain decisions made in the last few years by African leaders must be understood. For instance, in the June 1991 summit meeting of the OAU which was held in Abuja, the heads of state adopted a treaty establishing an African Economic Community (AEC) to be created in stages by the year 2025 (OAU, 1991). Similarly, in May 1991, the African Leadership Forum (ALF) under Olusegun
Obasanjo’s initiative on development and co-operation in Africa launched the Kampala Document which acknowledges the link between security, stability, development and cooperation in Africa. This made additional input to what Kwame Nkrumah’s “Security Calabash” recommends, inter alia, (i) the constitution of continental peace-keeping machinery, (ii) the adoption of a non-aggression treaty among all African countries, and (iii) the formation of an African Peace Council (APC), composed of eminent African personalities and elder statesmen. This Council was charged with the task of ensuring that peace, harmony and tranquillity is created among African states (African Leadership Forum, 1991: 9-13). Possibly the most ambitious and far-reaching recent peace-making initiative is the OAU’s Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution adopted at the Cairo summit meeting of June 1993. It is noteworthy that the new OAU mechanism has a clear mandate to concern itself with internal conflicts. It is also charged with anticipating and preventing conflicts, as well as with peace-keeping and peace-building activities.

The OAU mechanism got off to an auspicious start as the US contribution to its peace-keeping and peacemaking operations amounted to $8.3 million for 1994-1995, and yet its eleven member states’ committee has only met twice a year since 1994 (Lakidi, 1996; OAU, 1993; Kiplagat, 2001).

An Overview

There has been an ongoing debate by Africanists like Chege, 1999, Diop, 1987, Makau wa Mutua, 2000, Martin, 2002, among others concerning the place of Africa in the world with reference to its development, governance and leadership, arguing that Africa became the passive victim of the ideological excesses of advanced world (Igwe, 2010) because her leaders have simply required it to be so.

It is thus, proper to argue that the spirit of nationalism which is constructed on the principles of selfless service and commitment to the welfare of the people is absent (Madubuike, 2013). It is an ideological conservatism of a group of people who believe that the society should change from colonialism to political democracy, especially during the colonial epoch. For instance, in Nigeria, during the colonial times, the likes of Nnamdi Azikiwe, Obafemi Awolowo, Tafawa Balewa, and Kwame Nkrumah, Julius Nyerere, among others, were the acclaimed nationalists who fought for African states Independence. Interestingly these men were mere opportunists not nationalists per se, because they used their western education to exploit the masses ignorance so as to attend social recognition and political desire without recourse to the historical traditions and customs of African peoples (Madubuike, 2013). Consequently, they used tribal newspapers established as a means of attack to colonial rule to back up their self-interests on the national issues. Ideally they won political independent but logically failed to drop the colonial language and administrative structures (colonial mentality), it may be for diplomatic reasons which to my view is not good enough for our development. For instance, partly, the negative impact of the above is manifest in the lack of African oriented structures in development ideals for self-determination. Moreover, Africans are divided along indigenous languages and geographic locations (Berlin Conference 1886) for identification. Thus, the different indigenous languages became inferior to that of colonial masters. The question again is how can African identity, value, moral, science, education and development be sustained? That is why in 1960 at independence(Iwara,2008:21) noted that the burning question that agitated the minds of many people especially politicians and politically aware academics and journalists were what language should newly independent Nigeria adopt as its national language? By necessary implications, the nationalists did not consider the importance of a unique national language for the people; rather they went ahead to adopt English Language as official national language. This lamentable lack of vision has spell doom for the nation unity in Nigeria in particular and Africa in general any day (Madubuike, 2013). Put differently, (Ojukwu, 1991) argued that our lack of political will to transform our primordial instincts and create a modern polity is our problem. Perhaps, the most serious and most poignant of these movements aimed in defiance of the Nigerian state remains the plot by the partisans of Action Group Party led by chief Obafemi Awolowo(Yoruba leader) to violently overthrow the government of Nigeria in the first republic, and the Biafra secession (led by Ojukwu, in agreement with other Igbo leaders) which unilaterally excised the eastern part of Nigeria from Nigeria federation between 1966 and 1970. The civil war ended but created what remains today reluctant citizenship. The question is who and where are the Pan-Africanists to deliver us? The answer is that there are Westernized political elites rather than African nationalists, who see nothing good in African cultures. In the true sense of the present predicament there is lack of nationalists in Africa. All we see and hear from our leaders are building African societies on the European and American ideologies, and even on the new Asian tiger’s models of development.

The way forward

The Kenyan human rights activist-scholar (Makau wa,
2000) has recently proposed a redrawing of the map of Africa to construct only 15 viable states as opposed to the 54 existing today. He did this on the basis of the argument that “the consequences of the failed post-colonial state are so destructive that radical solutions must now be contemplated to avert the wholesale destruction of groups of African people”. The creation of these new states includes historical factors such as pre-colonial political systems and ethnographic pattern, ethnic similarities, and alliances based on cultural homogeneity and economic viability. Based on these criteria, Mutua’s mao of Africa creates new countries by abolishing some and combining others. Thus, the new Republic of Kusini (meaning “South” in Kiswahili), would include South Africa, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Lesotho, Swaziland and Malawi. The new Egypt would combine Egypt and northern Sudan. Nubia would bring together Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and southern Sudan. Mali would include Mali, Senegal, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde. Somalia would absorb Djibouti, the Ogaden province of Ethiopia and Kenya’s North-eastern province. Congo would combine ethnically similar people of Central African Republic, Congo, Zaire, Rwanda and Burundi, while Ghana would consist of Ghana, Cote d’Ivoire, Benin, Togo, Nigeria, Cameroon, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea and São. Tome Principe. Benin would take in Chad, Burkina Faso and Niger Algeria and Angola would remain the same, while Libya would absorb Tunisia, Morocco, Western Sahara and Mauritania would become Sahara. The new state of Kisiwani — which “means, “island” in Kiswahili — would bring together Madagascar, Mauritius and the Comoros (Mutua, 2000: 17). While one may take issue with the historical, demographic and ethno-regional logic of this proposal, its urgency and relevance are undeniable.

By extension, as early as 1960, the Senegalese scholar Cheikh Diop had proposed an ambitious and elaborate blueprint for Africa. Lamenting the relative failure of African regional organizations and of the OAU due to their member states’ reluctance to relinquish any measure of sovereignty, Diop observed that Africa’s security and development problems can only be resolved on a continental scale and within a federal framework.

He argued that the rational development of Africa’s tremendous energy and natural resources potential required a safe political and economic area that only a regional or sub-regional federated state could provide. Among his main policy recommendations were the adoption of a single African working language for purposes of education, culture and administration: the immediate unification of Francophone and Anglophone Africa, the creation of a strong industrial infrastructure and the setting up of a powerful army (Diop, 1987: 88-89). One wonders how many conflicts would have been avoided, how many lives would have been saved, and how much progress would have been achieved toward sustainable development had this proposal been implemented.

CONCLUSION

This paper attempts to examine the dilemma posed to Pan-Africanism: its challenges to good governance and development and subsequent threats to unification after colonization experience. However, in view of the two schools of thoughts: Afro-pessimists and Afro-optimists, whose contrary points of view look at Africa from their different perspectives. The pessimists argue for the decolonization of Africa in one form or the other, while the optimists point to the recent positive achievements of the post-colonial African state in democratization and economic reform. Our analysis has fallen somewhere in between and has drawn attention to the positive proposals, which would have carried elements of regionalism and federalism to a conclusive implementation. The analysis in the paper has also pointed to the positive outcomes of the post-Cold War era in that it has made African leaders’ realize that they must henceforth look inwards and count first and foremost on themselves and develop appropriate strategies of collective self-reliance. This self-reliance can be achieved at the sub-regional and regional levels if these states are to ever come out of underdevelopment.

Recommendations

African scholars and policy-makers thus have a duty to be bold and innovative in their constitutional and institutional restructuring experiments of what Africa ought to be among developed nations in view of her enormous natural and human resources.

Having recognized the obvious dilemma and challenges facing African governance and development after gaining independence as a way forward, and dismal failure of the neo-colonial African nation-states as alternative, the challenge now facing African nations is to transcend the existing foreign relations based on the detects of neo-colonialism and globalization processes. In so doing, African leaders should create sub-regional and federal structures within which the various traditional cultures would have their rights to self-determination recognized. A new development model for Africa should integrate the concepts of culture-security, development and democracy based on African historical and cultural realities. These should then be focused on satisfying the
basic needs of security, economic, developmental goals, governance and political needs of the African people at the national, sub-regional and regional levels. By this approach the dilemma to African unification and development challenges would be removed.

REFERENCES

